

September 4, 2006

Freedom Watch

Combined Forces

Operation Care provides
help to Afghans

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Air Force Col. Donald Thompson, Combined Forces Command - Afghanistan surgeon general, plays with a young Afghan boy at the Kabul Orthopedic Organization.

Photo by Army Sgt. Carina M. Garcia
345th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment



Cover: An Afghan girl holds a backpack she received during an Operation Care mission at the Egyptian Hospital at Bagram Airfield.

Photo by Army Pfc. Michael J. Nyeste
19th Public Affairs Detachment

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Afghanistan **Freedom** Combined Forces Command - Afghanistan **Watch**

Freedom Watch is a weekly publication of
Combined Forces Command - Afghanistan.

CFC-A Commander Lt. Gen. Karl W. Eikenberry
Public Affairs Officer Col. Thomas Collins

Freedom Watch, an Army publication, is published each Monday by the 19th Public Affairs Detachment at Bagram Airfield, Afghanistan. Printed circulation is 5,000 copies per week.

In accordance with AR-360-1, this Army newspaper is an authorized publication for members of the U.S. military overseas.

Contents of the *Freedom Watch* are not necessarily the official view of, or endorsed by, the U.S. government, the Department of Defense or the Department of the Army.

Deadline for submissions is 0730 Zulu each Friday. All submissions are subject to editing by the 19th Public Affairs Detachment, located in Bldg. 415, Room 205, Bagram Airfield. We can be reached at DSN 318-231-3338.

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U.S., Afghan, Pakistan senior NCOs meet for first time

By Air Force Tech. Sgt.

Matt Summers

**Combined Forces Command - Afghanistan
public affairs**

KABUL, Afghanistan -- Senior enlisted leaders from Pakistan, Afghanistan and the United States met for the first time this week to share insights between their respective armed forces and future interoperability.

"Building a relationship between these forces is essential," said Command Sgt. Maj. Daniel Wood, Combined Forces Command-Afghanistan command sergeant major, the top U.S. NCO in the country.

Wood said he thought it was important to create an enduring engagement plan because the relationship between Afghanistan and Pakistan is important not only to the U.S. mission in Afghanistan, but also to the overall campaign in support of the war on terror.

The meeting, linked to the U.S. Central Command's Theater Security Cooperation program, coincided with the 18th Tripartite Commission meeting, made up of senior military and diplomatic representatives from Afghanistan, Pakistan, Coalition forces in Afghanistan, and



Photo by Army Spc. Robert Honeycutt

Army Command Sgt. Maj. Daniel Wood, Combined Forces Command-Afghanistan command sergeant major, talks with senior NCOs from the Afghan National Army and Pakistan Armed Forces at Kabul International Airport on Aug. 22, shortly before the beginning of the first-ever meeting between senior NCOs of the three nations.

NATO's International Security Assistance Force.

Tripartite participants discussed future operations and how the security environment can be better shaped in the region.

The senior NCOs explained the present construct of their respective services, describing promotion systems, professional development paths, and duties and

See NCOs, Page 5

Dari/Pashtu phrase of the week



Afghan cultural tidbit

Where are my friends?

Dari

Doostani man Kuja hastand?
(Dos-tani-man ku-ja has-tand?)

Pashtu

Zama malgari chairta di?
(Za-ma mal-gari chair-ta-di?)

Photo by Army Pfc. Michael J. Nyeste

The Combined Forces Command-Afghanistan has provided nearly \$3.8 million in fiscal 2006 for 45 Urgent Humanitarian or Reconstruction projects in Afghanistan. This includes humanitarian supplies, such as blankets, clothes, stoves, tents, food, hygiene items, firewood, and tool kits.

Afghan government starts new pay program for national police



Photos by Army Sgt. Michael J. Taylor

Afghan bank teller Saeed Faarough counts out money as an Afghan National Policeman waits to get paid.

**By Army Sgt.
Michael J. Taylor**
Joint Logistics Command public affairs

PARWAN PROVINCE, Afghanistan -- The Parwan Province was the second province to change the way its national policemen received pay Aug. 6 with the implementation of the first-ever individualized salary program called "Pay by the List."

PBL, a program started by the Afghan minister of finance, gives a list of ANP names from different districts to a designated bank in that district. The policemen from that respective area report to receive their wages on the designated payday.

Prior to the program, a single representative from each district was chosen to personally handle and distribute monies for pay to the ANP in his district. Sometimes this way of payment was unreliable, resulting in many policemen not getting paid for several months at a time.

The program is the first step towards implementing an elec-

tronic fund transfer program and is yet another sign that the ANP is modernizing.

To help with the implementation of this new program, Afghan officials asked for assistance from the Combined Security Transition Command - Afghanistan, who then asked for support from the 10th Soldier Support Battalion based in Fort Drum, N.Y.

The 10th SSB and the CSTC-A, support the program by helping them figure out a payment system and monitoring its progress.

"We are helping facilitate their payment system and make it more effective," said Army Chief Warrant Officer Pedro A. Del Granado, a human resource chief for the Joint Logistics Command, from Germantown, Md.

Another U.S. agency helping with the program is the Dyna Corps Corporation, which helps by providing identification cards and security for the bank on pay days.

When the policemen go to the bank, their name appears on a list,

See PAID, Page 6

Enduring Voices

Who do you think will win the NCAA Division I football national championship?



**Petty Officer 2nd Class
Sean Oesterreich**

Bagram Airfield

"USC. They don't rebuild; they reload."



**Army Pvt.
Michael Young**

Bagram Airfield

"LSU. They had a tough year last year, and they're due for a comeback."



**Army Sgt.
Donte Holley**

Bagram Airfield

"Va. Tech. They haven't lost too many good players, so they should be strong."



**Air Force Staff Sgt.
Nick Batura**

Bagram Airfield

"Texas. Texas is the greatest state in the union."

ACCE provides airpower experts to OEF

By Air Force Maj.

David Kurle

**455th Air Expeditionary Wing
public affairs**

BAGRAM AIRFIELD, Afghanistan -- A special team of Air Force officers is helping provide airpower at the right time and place for U.S. Army and Coalition forces on the ground in Afghanistan.

The Air Component Coordination Element is relatively new to operations involving more than one branch of service and other nations. The ACCE team here supports Combined Joint Task Force-76, which oversees Operation Enduring Freedom.

"We help the CJTF planners integrate air and space power into the development of their campaign plan," said Brig. Gen. Christopher D. Miller, the ACCE director here.

According to Air Force Doctrine Document Two, the ACCE director "normally has no authority to direct or employ forces."

But, in Afghanistan, there is

a unique arrangement.

Miller is also the commander of the 455th Air Expeditionary Wing here, which provides airlift, strike and electronic-warfare aircraft. In that role, he provides airpower forces and helps the Combined Air Operations Center, located in Southwest Asia, employ them.

The ACCE functions much like a neighborhood hardware store, with each department run by an expert in a particular facet of home repair. Instead of building a house, its customers are building a free and democratic Afghanistan.

When a customer, in this case CJTF-76, needs an airpower tool for a particular project, or advice on how best to use the airpower tools at its disposal, the CJTF commander consults Miller, who then turns to his experts in each department of the ACCE.

"I don't think any of our primary interfaces are hesitant to step up and ask for our expertise," said Maj. Troy Etheridge, the strategic airlift expert on

the ACCE staff. "In the end, it makes us feel that our job here is beneficial."

The ACCE's divisions — plans, strike, airlift, space and intelligence — provide advice on how to utilize the airpower tools in their respective areas.

The Air Force created the ACCE organization to meet the growing demands for airpower in U.S. Central Command, which is simultaneously managing military activities in Operations Iraqi and Enduring Freedom, as well as humanitarian and advisor operations in Africa.

All air operations in Central Command's area of responsibility are conducted from the CAOC. To provide in-person customer service in all three places to represent the center, three ACCE staffs stood up to work directly with the three task forces.

"It's the difference between doing customer service in person or by a 1-800 number," said Miller said. "The ACCE staff provides a physical, per-

sonal presence that solves problems and facilitates the best use of airpower resources."

Working on the ACCE also provides Air Force officers a broader vision of U.S. and Coalition operations, which will provide valuable expertise to their careers later on.

"It's given me more perspective on how airpower benefits forces on the ground," said Maj. Lisa Webster, a C-130 Hercules pilot who works in the airpower division.

With the International Security Assistance Force taking over more of the operation in Afghanistan, the ACCE will need to learn how to open its doors to more customers.

"We are doing everything in our power to make sure ISAF succeeds," said Maj. Jeffrey Lanphear, who heads the space division.

The ACCE will have no shortage of customers to its "hardware store" until the job of building a stable democracy in Afghanistan is completed.

NCOs, from Page 3

responsibilities of NCOs.

Meetings at Kabul's Camp Eggers were followed by a visit to the Kabul Military Training Center, the training home for the Afghan National Army.

Sergeant Major of the Afghan Army Roshan Safi, a graduate of the U.S. Army's Sergeant Major Academy at Fort Bliss, Texas, provided a tour of some of the facilities and a close-up view of squad-level tactics.

The Pakistani senior NCOs came away with a greater appreciation for how training is conducted in the Afghanistan army, Roshan said.

"I know they were excited, and when they go back, they will be talking about the training of the Afghan Army," he said. "And I hope in the future we have a

chance to go there (Pakistan) to see how their soldiers are trained."

Wood, who has experience with Theater Security Cooperation programs in Central and South America, said the information sharing is invaluable.

"Each army does things a little bit different and in some ways drastically different," he said. "But we can all learn from each other's experiences."

Security cooperation programs foster the personal relationships between U.S. military personnel and their counterparts in partner countries, helping to build the trust and confidence needed between allies when they fight as partners against a common foe.

Despite their close proximity and common enemy, the Afghan and Pakistani senior NCOs had never met their counter-

parts, Wood said. Perceptions or misconceptions were clarified during the dialogue created at the meetings.

Described alternately as "the backbone, the life blood and the fuel that makes the Army go," Wood said each country's NCO corps is essential. "You can't have peace without a military, and you can't have an effective military without the NCO leadership of people like the ones sitting around the table (here)."

In addition to meeting on a regular basis, the engagement initiative may lead to sending NCOs to each other's professional development academies and, long-term, a possible NCO exchange program.

"This conference was an ice-breaker that will hopefully lay the groundwork for better working relationships and better communication in the future," Wood said.

Government conducts campaign against polio

By Air Force Capt. Kevin Tuttle
Qalat Provincial Reconstruction Team

QALAT, Afghanistan -- Members of the Ministry of Health in Kabul began a three-day campaign Aug. 20 to vaccinate Afghans against polio.

The Expanded Program of Immunizations sent a team to the Qalat Provincial Reconstruction Team in Zabul Province.

"In all of Afghanistan, we have this polio eradication campaign through Aug. 22," said Payenda Gal Abed, surveillance officer for the Ministry of Health's Expanded Program of Immunizations. "Afghanistan, Pakistan, Nigeria and India still have cases of polio and vulnerable children. We have to go to each village and each home to vaccinate each child against this crippling disease."

This campaign has 11,800 volunteers who are spread throughout the country, going door-to-door in villages and towns giving children 5 years old and younger the two oral drops of the vaccine.

Five provinces in Regional Command South reported 26 cases of polio, and at least one case was confirmed to be in Zabul.

The campaign's goal is to immunize 7.3 million Afghan

children, which includes roughly 100,000 of them in Zabul.

"Each volunteer goes to the village to give children two drops of the vaccine, which means they can have a bright future without worry of contracting the disease," said Gal Abed. "If a child gets polio, he will never recover."

Gal Abed said people should bring their children into the clinic to get vaccinated because every child in every community has a right to have the chance to be healthy.

He explained that this campaign will continue because children need to receive a total of five doses of the polio drops in order to be fully vaccinated.

According to the Nemours Foundation's Center for Children's Health Media website, www.kidshealth.com, paralytic polio occurs in 0.1 to 2 percent of all polio cases, which causes paralysis of muscles and can result in death. Other milder forms of the disease can result in flu-like symptoms or upper-respiratory infections.

Polio is transmitted primarily through the ingestion of material contaminated with the virus found in stool. Not washing hands after using the bathroom and drinking contaminated water were common cul-



Photo by Air Force Capt. Kevin Tuttle

Qalat Hospital Interim Director Hashim Alokozai, left, gives two drops of the polio vaccine to an Afghan baby boy.

prits in the transmission of the disease.

"The disease of polio has been a scourge to mankind for thousands of years," said Air Force Lt. Col. Christopher Scharenbrock, doctor and

PRT's chief medical physician.

"When kids ask 'what was polio' because it no longer exists, it will be a wonderful day. This program is aiming to eradicate polio from the world," he said.

PAID, from Page 4

which is provided by the minister of finance and the minister of interior, and the bank pays the policemen upon presentation of their identification card.

"I like this new process because it is more organized than before," said Siad Nahfooz, an ANP officer from the Parwan Province.

"It still needs a little more organization,

but it's better than before," he said.

In the near future the CSTC and the 10th SSB plan to assist in implementing an electronic funds transfer program.

"Before this new process, I was getting about 800 Afghani in one month. Now with this new program, I received 3,500 Afghani," said Kaka Shire, an ANP officer from the Parwan Province.

The goal is to get everyone with the ANP

paid by December, which is about 60,000 people.

"I believe that this program is well seen by the Afghan people and the ANP leaders and government," said Del Granado. "It is the beginning of a very well organized system that will not only build morale within the ANP organization, but also put the security of Afghanistan in better hands."

U.S. service members provide humanitarian aid in Afghanistan

By Army Spc. James Tamez
19th Public Affairs Detachment

BAGRAM AIRFIELD, Afghanistan -- In a continuing effort to provide humanitarian assistance to the people of Afghanistan, U.S. service members are working to provide unprecedented amounts of food supplies throughout Afghanistan.

The humanitarian-aid drops are continuing until supplies run out.

"We make sure the people receiving the humanitarian aid receive the same quality of food as the troops," said Army Chief Warrant Officer Carrol Burgundy, 719th Medical Detachment (Veterinary Services). "We follow the same guidelines with the humanitarian aid that we follow with the dining facilities."

Personnel from the Joint

Logistics Command, Combined Joint Task Force 76 and Task Force Med are working hard to make this a success, Burgundy said.

"We feel it is very important to ensure we are meeting the needs of the Afghan people who need it," Burgundy said.

The work can be time consuming, but it is worth it, said Army Spc. Chantell Davis, 719th Med. Det. (Vet. Serv.). There were only three trucks the first day, but every item had to have an inspection to ensure there weren't any rotten or bad food or drink items.

"We have to make sure they receive the best quality food," Davis said. "Some of the items for the drop included canned fruits, vegetables, pasta and water."

With the mission only half-way over, more than 554,000 pounds of food has been dis-



Photo by Army Spc. James Tamez

Afghan citizens receive humanitarian aid provided by U.S. military personnel.

tributed, Burgundy said.

Being able to provide this kind of humanitarian assistance required the help of many people and organizations, Burgundy said. Personnel from the JLC helped by providing excess rations not being eaten by Coalition personnel. CJTF-76 helped with

the coordination and transportation. The veterinarians provided the food inspections. It is very satisfying work.

"People are getting fed," Burgundy said. "When we see pictures from the drops, it builds morale and shows us we are here doing good things for the people."

President of Romania visits Task Force Calugareni at FOB Lagman

By Romanian Maj. Luigi Cojocaru
Task Force Calugareni public affairs

QALAT, Afghanistan -- The President of Romania, Traian Basescu, visited Romanian troops currently stationed at Forward Operating Base Lagman on Aug. 10 during a tour of the Middle East.

Soldiers from the 2nd Infantry Battalion, Task Force Calugareni, welcomed Basescu at FOB Lagman where the president discussed operations in Zabul.

The president thanked TF Calugareni for their hard work and their great effort to succeed during this difficult mission.

He also met with Romanian Lt. Col. Daniel Petrescu, who briefed him on military operations in the theater.

"I appreciate you accomplishing this mission successfully. Take care of one another so that you can come back home unscathed," said Basescu. "I came here because it is my habit to visit each new Romanian contingent in theater of operations Afghanistan."



Photo by Romanian Army Maj. Luigi Cojocaru

President of Romania Traian Basescu met with Romanian soldiers of the 2nd Infantry Battalion, Task Force Calugareni, during a visit to Afghanistan.

Since its creation in 1993, this Romanian armed forces unit was established to conduct defense missions within its nation and peacekeeping operations around the world entrusted by international organizations such as the United Nations, European Union and NATO.

In 2006, TF Calugareni was given the mission to support the Afghan National

Security Forces in the Zabul Province. Here they were part of the Coalition force, which is now under ISAF/NATO command.

"In regards to your mission, I can say that is one of the most difficult missions compared to the other Romanian troops' missions who serve in (the Middle East)," said Basescu.



(Above) Army Chaplain (Lt. Col.) Ebb and Army Maj. Gen. Marty Umbarger receive gifts at the Kapisa orphanage.

(Left) Army Maj. Gen. Marty Umbarger visits the Kapisa orphanage.

Guard AG visits Kapisa o

Afghan girls take a break from their sewing class during a tour of the Kapisa orphanage.



By Army Pfc. Anna K. Perry
19th Public Affairs Detachment

KAPISA, Afghanistan -- A recent visit to the Kapisa orphanage found everybody involved receiving gifts. For the children, school supplies, toys and stuffed animals. For the soldiers, a chance to show a special guest how their missions are helping the people of Afghanistan.

Members of Task Force Tiger welcomed Army Maj. Gen. Marty Umbarger, the adjutant general of the Indiana National Guard, aboard their convoy to the orphanage Aug. 24.

Umbarger came to see what his Indiana soldiers are doing and to see how the people of Afghanistan are benefiting from the support received from back home, said Army Chaplain (Lt. Col.) Eric Ebb, Base Ops chaplain.

"The general got to see the soldiers take the donations from the individuals, churches and schools



Eric Ebb greets children lined up to see him. Ebb is the Task Force Tiger chaplain. Umbarger meets with officials at the Kapisa

Orphanage

from America and give them to the children who so desperately need them," he added.

Ebb said he believed the general's visit was beneficial for a number of reasons.

Senior level officers don't often get to see what the soldiers are doing from the soldiers' perspective. This gives them a chance to see the end result of the decisions they make at their level, Ebb said.

"Personally, I think he enjoyed the experience," Ebb said of Umbarger. Umbarger said he is proud of the work his troops have accomplished in Afghanistan.

The general's presence on the mission also filled Soldiers with pride.

"It makes a person feel good to know generals and colonels aren't just sitting back home, they are actually coming over to show they care," said Army Spc. Marcus Chaplin, a chaplain's assistant to Ebb.



Army Maj. Gen. Marty Umbarger shakes hands with an Afghan child before handing him a new toy.

Photos by Army Pfc. Anna K. Perry

New district center opens in Dari Nur

By Air Force 1st Lt.

Melissa J. Stevens

Jalalabad PRT public affairs

JALALABAD, Afghanistan

-- Members of the Nangarhar Provincial Council joined with representatives from the Jalalabad Provincial Reconstruction Team and Dari Nur district leaders and elders to celebrate the grand opening of the new Dari Nur District Center office building Aug. 20.

Funded through USAID, the new facility provides much-needed office space for the district leadership and a place for villagers to come for help from the district government.

Mr. Muslimyar, the provincial council chairman, said he was very happy to be a part of the opening ceremony.

"This is a gift from the American people," he said. "They have given us this beautiful building and now it depends on us and the people who work here to use it to solve the problems of the people in Dari Nur. We must join together, hand-in-hand. All of the people of Afghanistan must now come together to support our government and



Photos by Air Force 2nd Lt. Melissa Stevens

Abdul Akbar, Mr. Muslimyar and Inge Fryklund cut the ribbon to the new district center office building in Dari Nur.

rebuild our country."

Mr. Abdul Akbar, the Dari Nur district sub-governor agreed and said that now is the time for rebuilding.

"It is time for Afghanistan to develop things, and day-by-day we are seeing that happening," Akbar said. "We give much thanks to our Coalition Forces

friends who are helping us so much."

Inge Fryklund, the PRT USAID field program manager, said that although USAID funded the project, the construction of the new facility was completely an Afghan effort. From the architect to the engineer and the contractor to the laborer, she said the success of the building is a success for the people of Dari Nur.

"This building symbolizes a partnership between Afghans and American," she said. "But now we make the transition to the sub-governor and it becomes a government office building for the people and a place where they know they can come for help from their local government."

Fryklund said that when the town uses this building to solve problems, "the children will see this and they will grow up

knowing that to solve their problems they can go to this district center and they will not fight."

She said the time for fighting is over.

Air Force Lt. Col. Dave Naisbitt, the PRT commander, echoed the importance of using the district center to show how the local government can resolve issues versus fighting.

"This building shows that you have the ability to govern your own district and to take care of your own people," he said.

He urged the people to get their children involved and stay focused on them.

"Look to the future to make it brighter for your children," Naisbitt said. "So their children's children can come and work here and help make Afghanistan strong so you can continue to fly your country's flag proudly like you do today."



The Dari Nur District Center will provide a place for Afghans to seek help from their district government.

Operation Care helps Afghans at Bagram Airfield

By Army Pfc.

Michael J. Nyeste

19th Public Affairs Detachment

BAGRAM AIRFIELD, Afghanistan -- Air Force, Army, Marine and Navy volunteers here took part in Operation Care at the Egyptian Field Hospital here Aug. 24.

"Anytime you see a kid smile, it's the best," said Army 1st Sgt. Nick Clutinger, a committee chairman for Operation Care. "Volunteers take part in Operation Care to show the Afghans the compassionate side of our military and to feel the gratification they get for helping their fellow man."

The smiles began as local Afghans entered the field hospital to receive treatment. After the Egyptian doctors administered their aid, they informed the Afghans that Operation Care would be arriving shortly and would be handing out aid as they left the compound.

"We're partnering with our ally, Egypt, and helping the Afghan people. I see a wonderful hospital here," said Army Maj. Gen. Marty Umbarger, the adjutant general of the Indiana National Guard, who observed the volunteers in action.

Roughly 100 Afghans sat down in a line and minutes later, the volunteers from Operation Care arrived in their vehicles and quickly set up their supply stations.

Then, five Afghans at a time went to the stations to receive numerous aid and supplies, which included toys, baby dolls, back packs, clothes, shoes, water, candy and portable radios.

Many Afghans responded to the group's efforts and kindness by repeatedly saying "tash akur," which is "thank you" in Dari.

"It's a huge motivation and boosts your morale completely," said Air Force Senior Airman Carlo Cruz-Francois, a participant in Operation Care. "I love working with kids," said Navy Petty Officer 2nd Class Conrad Brown, a participant in Operation Care, who has done volunteer work before Care. "If anyone has the opportunity to come out here and help, they should."

Anyone who is interested in taking part in Operation Care or would like to donate supplies can contact Army 1st Sgt. Nick Clutinger at 231-3222.



Photo by Army Pfc. Michael J. Nyeste

A mother carries her baby while holding the many supplies she received from Operation Care volunteers at the Egyptian Field Hospital.



PHOTOS FROM THE FIELD

Soldiers of C Company, 27th Engineer Battalion, practice proper airborne landings at Bagram Airfield. This training was a way for the company to observe National Airborne Day on Aug. 16.

Photo by Army Sgt. Michael J. Taylor
Joint Logistics Command public affairs

If you have high-quality photos of service members supporting the Coalition mission or enjoying well-deserved off-duty time, please e-mail them to freedomwatch@baf.afgn.army.mil. Please include full identification and caption information, including who is in the photo and what action is taking place.

Bagram aircrew drops ammo to Soldiers in firefight

By Air Force Maj. David Kurle
455th Air Expeditionary Wing public affairs

BAGRAM AIRFIELD, Afghanistan - The C-130 Hercules crew, all from the Alaska Air National Guard's 144th Airlift Squadron, found out Aug. 10 how valuable their contribution is to Operation Enduring Freedom.

Scheduled to airdrop a load of ammunition to U.S. Army Soldiers operating near a high-desert drop-zone, the crew flew twice over the area with no radio contact from the unit on the ground.

"We wanted to drop the supplies, so we kept trying to contact the drop zone," said Air Force Maj. Jim Van Hoomissen, a C-130 pilot, who flies for Alaska Airlines in his civilian job.

Airlift crews cannot conduct an airdrop unless they receive confirmation from the ground that someone is there to retrieve the cargo and the landing area is safe.

Re-supplying U.S. and Coalition ground forces is a difficult proposition in Afghanistan.

Given some of the most rugged, mountainous terrain on Earth and a lack of road, there are no 18-wheelers bringing supplies to Soldiers operating in the more remote parts of the country.

To make deliveries, the 774th Expeditionary Airlift Squadron here utilizes one of the oldest airframes in the Air Force, the C-130 Hercules transport plane.

Van Hoomissen called it, "a truck with wings."

Turning the aircraft in the direction of Bagram, where the Alaska crew is based, Van Hoomissen tried contacting the Army's drop zone controller on a different radio frequency and succeeded.

That's when the situation changed.

"We couldn't contact anyone before because (the Soldiers) were engaged with the enemy," Van Hoomissen said. "We could tell from their voices they were engaged."

While Van Hoomissen talked on the radio, his co-pilot, Air Force 1st Lt. Scott Altenburg, flew the four-engine aircraft and maneuvered it back toward the drop zone, avoiding numerous thunderstorms



Photo by Air Force Maj. David Kurle

A C-130 Hercules transport aircraft from the Alaska Air National Guard's 144th Airlift Squadron takes off from Bagram Airfield.

in the area. Aircraft, especially large ones, and thunderstorms don't mix, and an airdrop requires a steady stable platform for successful delivery.

"There was a firefight going on, but we were able to get clearance to drop from the drop zone controller," he said. "They wanted the stuff now."

The flight engineer, Air Force Tech. Sgt. Christine Enselewski, monitored vital aircraft fuel and oxygen indicators while keeping an eye out for weather and other aircraft.

The task for Navigator Air Force Lt. Col. Scott Lubin was to re-program the planes' self-contained navigation system computer in order to provide the pilots with navigation information, including directions back to the drop zone.

Loadmasters Air Force Senior Master Sgt. Eric Heiker and Air Force Master Sgt. Gordy Heinen began working feverishly in the plane's cargo compartment getting the cargo ready to drop.

"We were getting bits and pieces of what the guys on the flight deck were talking about," Heinen said. "We really needed to get this drop off."

Between the twists and turns of flying the aircraft back to the drop zone and the winds generated by the weather, working in the cargo compartment was rough.

"We were getting tossed around a little bit," Heinen said.

To complicate the situation, A-10 Thunderbolt II ground-attack aircraft were assisting the Soldiers on the ground, firing their 30-mm cannons in the area where the C-130 crew needed to drop the cargo.

Using the Army's drop zone controller as a go-between, Van Hoomissen coordinated with the A-10 pilots, letting them know the C-130 was coming around for an airdrop.

After measuring the winds to determine where the six bundles of ammunition would fall under their parachutes, the crew pointed the plane's nose to a course that would take it over the drop zone. At just the right moment, the containers of ammunition slid out the cargo door of the C-130 and drifted to the ground.

"To know that (the Soldiers) were actually engaged at the time says a lot," Heinen said. "There was a lot of satisfaction in that drop."

As the C-130 climbed and turned away from the drop zone after delivering the needed ammunition, Van Hoomissen recalls hearing the drop zone controller calling one more time on the radio.

"He said, 'Thanks, we really needed that airdrop,'" Van Hoomissen said.

Technology school prepares Afghan women for future

**By Army Sgt.
Mayra Kennedy
345th Mobile Public Affairs
Detachment**

KANDAHAR, Afghanistan

-- A large number of Afghan women are training to become English teachers and computer instructors in Kandahar City, in hopes of landing jobs as well as a career.

"Join the race of technology with Al-Birooni," is the motto at the Albironi Institute of Technology where these future career women are learning important skills to better themselves.

Sakina Sekanadira is a 21-year old English instructor at the Albironi institute. She has been working as an instructor there for almost three months and is hopeful that more Afghan women will join her class.

"They come from all over to class. We have two English sessions, one in the morning and the other in the afternoon," said Sekanadira, who teaches in the mornings.

Currently the institute offers classes such as sewing and computers, but English is unquestionably the subject that attracts most of the women.

Samera Qani, 16, and Shabnum Razi, 18, are both students at the institute who try to make it to class on a regular basis.

They said that it cost them around 60 Afghanis a day just to get to school but they are pleased to be out, learning English and meeting with other young Afghan women.

These two young Afghan women expressed joy in seeing their friends in class wearing some of the clothes they had made while taking the sewing class.

Another determined Afghan



Photos by Army Sgt. Mayra Kennedy

Samera Qani, 16, (right) and Shabnum Razi, 18, (left) are both students at the Albironi Institute of Technology where English, computer and sewing lessons are offered to Afghan women.

student is Fatana Mahek, a 16-year-old English instructor who learned the language in Pakistan and was fortunate enough to finish third grade there.

"I feel very well teaching the women," said Mahek. "For women, there aren't many opportunities, but teaching is one of them."

While in class, Mahek teaches eight of her students how to spell essential English words such as doctor, nurse and soldiers. She carefully explains how to pronounce these words correctly as she practices herself.

Whether they take a rickshaw, taxi or other means of transportation, these women are determined to learn and contribute to the future of their country.

"This way we can contribute to the economy and we can have jobs," said Sekanadira.



Afghan women of various ages walk to class to attend English, computer and sewing classes, which are offered at the Albironi Institute of Technology twice every day.

Coalition uncovers, destroys weapons cache

By Army Staff Sgt. Mark Aldridge
Task Force Gauntlet

BAGRAM AIRFIELD, Afghanistan --Task Force Gauntlet recently deployed a team of Soldiers and Airmen to a remote location in the mountains of Afghanistan to locate and destroy a known cache of munitions. The munitions could have been used by extremists against Coalition forces in the form of improvised explosive devices.

Army Lt. Col. Michael J. Price, Task Force Gauntlet Commander, was tipped off to the location of the cache by concerned locals. Price's commitment to the security of Afghanistan has allowed him to build productive relationships that frequently turn up caches.

"The people of Afghanistan have come forward readily to identify these caches," he said. "The more of these we find, the less ammunition will be out there for others to use against us."

Once the operation was approved, the assembled team began preparing for the mission by gathering the required resources. The team consisted of the Task Force Gauntlet Staff, the Mobile Reaction Force, the Protective Services Detail team, and an Explosive Ordnance Disposal team.

The team would be dropped into the area via Chinook helicopter. Once the cache was located and confirmed, a second Chinook would sling load in the required explosives to destroy the munitions.

After several rehearsals and in-depth planning, the day of the mission arrived. The team assembled before dawn on the airfield with all of their equipment and gear, awaiting pick-up. Last minute checks were conducted on the flight line by Army Sgt.

1st Class Jon Ours, the noncommissioned officer in charge of the ground forces. Once he was satisfied the troops were prepared, it was game time.



Photo by Task Force Gauntlet PSD Team

After several hours of searching, Task Force Gauntlet Soldiers discovered the cave with almost 200 large missiles.

The team loaded into the first Chinook and took off for the suspected cache site. After a 20-minute trip, the bird located a suitable landing zone and touched down. The Soldiers exited the chopper and immediately provided security while communications were established with the rear. Once that was completed, the team broke down into smaller pre-determined teams and set out for the cache.

With three guides leading the way, the first team traversed up and over steep ridges, lugging the gear that would be necessary to sustain the operation. After a grueling 70-minute climb, the guides located the suspected cache site. While security elements took up positions, a tactical command post was established on the highest ridgeline to support the entire operation.

Using shovels and their bare hands, Soldiers began digging into the side of a cliff, looking for any sign of the

cache. After an hour, a dark opening began to appear under the piles of rock and debris. When Price moved the last large rocks out of the way, a cave opening

was uncovered.

Skepticism turned to satisfaction as one-by-one, the Soldiers entered the cave to discover almost 200 large missiles. The cave was larger than expected and easily fit 15 Soldiers.

The word was relayed back to Bagram Airfield, and the second Chinook was inbound within 30 minutes. The PSD team used smoke grenades to mark the landing zone for the incoming Chinook. Dust blinded the entire team as the Chinook hovered with its load over a dry creek bed, then cut sling. It moved upstream about 500 meters and touched down again, allowing the remaining EOD members to exit the aircraft.

The sling load consisted of 73 cases of C4 and each case weighed about 40 pounds. The Soldiers began to carry these cases up the side of the mountain to the cave. With the temperatures hovering in the 90's, it turned out to be an arduous task.

After almost two and a half hours of heavy lifting and sweating, the task was completed. Then the C4 was lowered down into the cave and prepared for detonation. The EOD team carefully placed almost 2,000 pounds of high explosives throughout the cave, ensuring the blast

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"The more (caches) we find, the less ammunition will be out there for others to use against us."

Army Lt. Col. Michael J. Price
Task Force Gauntlet commander

Civilians assist military in the war on terror

By Army Spc. James Tamez

19th Public Affairs Detachment

BAGRAM AIRFIELD, Afghanistan -

- In an effort to support the global war on terror, U.S. government personnel and civilian employees from ManTech International Corporation provide U.S. military units with support in repairing equipment in Afghanistan.

"The bottom-line is we are here to help equip the Soldiers to fight the war on terror," said Edwin Suarez, chief government lead, Communications-Electronics Life Cycle Management Command. "We make sure that existing equipment is repaired and returned back to the Soldiers."

C-ELCMC, formally CECOM, takes the damaged items from units re-deploying from theater, gets them repaired and shipped back to the unit in the states, Suarez said. This saves millions of taxpayer dollars a year and gets equipment back to the units faster.

"We want to make every unit aware that we are here to help resolve their issues with C-ELCMC equipment," Suarez said.

C-ELCMC works hand-in-hand with the different units in Afghanistan to make sure damaged or unserviceable equipment makes it to the depot, Suarez said. There, the equipment will be examined to determine whether it can be returned to a serviceable level.

If the equipment cannot be made serviceable, then the unit is credited the equip-



Photos by Army Spc. James Tamez

Edwin Suarez and James Rowell look over a piece of satellite communication equipment being shipped to the depot for repair.

ment so its replacement can be ordered and received faster.

"We provide the necessary bodies for the logistics of the program," said James Rowell, fielding manager, ManTech International Corporation. "We make sure the items are captured and provide expertise in how to capture the equipment. That is the field equipment and day to day items needing to be repaired for Soldiers to continue their mission."

C-ELCMC personnel provide the ex-

pertise on proper documentation, exchange the paperwork, capture the equipment and get it turned into the depot, Rowell said. This is not for all the equipment in a unit's possession, only the items that fall under the C-ELCMC equipment umbrella.

"But even if it's not our equipment, we will help by directing you to the right people," Rowell said. "The most important part of my job is providing Soldier support."

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would destroy all of the missiles. Once completed, the team began to wrap up the site.

Price ventured into a nearby village to talk to the elder about the pending explosion. The elder had expressed concerns earlier about the safety of the village and its inhabitants to 1st Lt. Jason Desousa of the security team. Price conveyed through an interpreter that the blast would have minimal effect on the village.

The conversation turned to the needs of the village, and the elder made it clear that the

first priority for the area was a road in and out for the people. Price ensured the elder that he would coordinate a Humanitarian Aid drop the following week, providing the locals with basic necessities. He also said he would pass on the requests of the village through the proper channels.

The villagers had been told earlier to protect themselves behind a ridgeline during the blast, and the tactical command post was able to observe the villagers move to that area. Once the meeting was completed, the Coalition Soldiers

began moving towards a safe area near the second landing zone upstream on the creek bed. Once the Soldiers were in place, all eyes turned to the cliff. One minute later, a huge explosion shook the area as the blast went off right on time. The soldiers watched as a huge dust cloud enveloped the area.

In the distance, the Chinook could be heard coming in for the scheduled pick-up time. A light rain began to fall as the wheels touched down and the rear ramp opened. The Soldiers filed into the helicopter quickly, tired and dirty from

the day-long operation. The flight crew gave the all clear and the Chinook lifted off the creek bed and headed for Bagram Airfield.

The entire operation was a complete success from beginning to end. Every Soldier involved stayed focused and motivated. The cache was located and destroyed, prohibiting the enemy to use it against Coalition Forces. This was what the Soldiers of Task Force Gauntlet had come here to do. They were not only doing their job, but they were making a difference.

Freedom Watch

September 4, 2006



"Strength and courage aren't always measured in medals and victories. They are measured in the struggles they overcome. The strongest people aren't always the people who win, but the people who don't give up when they lose."

-Ashley Hodgeson